

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 EA-07
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 MC-02 /111 W
-----090117Z 078812 /73

R 082304Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2668

INFO ADDIS ABABA 1759

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, DM

SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL: CONCLUSIONS OF BENIN VISITING
MISSION REPORT

1. THERE FOLLOW THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL VISITING MISSION TO BENIN:

III CONCLUSIONS

134. IN THE COURSE OF ITS VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN,
UNDERTAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS MANDATE TO INVESTIAGE THE EVENTS
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OF 16 JANUARY AT CONTONOU, THE SPECIAL MISSION HEARD TESTIMONY OF
MANY INDIVIDUALS BELONGING TO DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES, INSPECTED
RELEVANT SITES AND EXAMINED ALL EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO IT. IT ALSO
HEARD STATEMENTS OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND HELD
DISCUSSIONS WITH BENIN AUTHORITIES.

135. BASED ON THESE ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATIONS, THE SPECIAL MISSION

IS IN A POSITION TO DRAW THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE WHICH IT BELIEVES
CORRESPONDS SUBSTANTIALY WITH THE ACTUAL EVENTS OF 16 JANUARY 1977
IN COTONOU.

136. ON SUNDAY, 16, JANUARY 1977, AT ABOUT 7:00 A.M. (LOCAL TIME),
A 4-ENGINE AIRCRAFT WITH NO IDENTIFICATION MARKS MADE AN UNAUTHORIZED
LANDING AT THE COTONOU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. FROM THIS AIRCRAFT
DISEMBARKED A GROUP OF ABOUT 100 PERSONS WEARING MILITARY UNIFORMS.
A LARGE MAJORITY OF THIS GROUP WERE PERSONS BELONGING TO THE WHITE
RACE. THE OTHERS WERE BLACK PERSONS. THEY CARRIED A LARGE QUANTITY
OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION WITH THEM AND ACTED AS
A MILITARY UNIT. THEIR LINGUA FRANCA WAS FRENCH.

137. AFTER SEIZING THE AIRPORT BUILDING AND ESTABLISHING CONTROL IN
THAT AREA IMMEDIATELY AFTER DISEMBARKATION, THE ATTACKING FORCE
ESTABLISHED A COMMAND POST AT THE AIRPORT. THE BULK OF THE ATTACKING
FORCE THEN MARCHED INTO THREE SEPARATE COLUMNS EASTWARD IN THE
DIRECTION
OF THE CITY OF COTONOU. IT COMMANDEERED VEHICLES AT THE AIRPORT, AS WELL

AS FROM INNOCENT PASSERS-BY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CARRYING
FOR PERSONNEL
AND MILITARY AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. THE EXTREME POINTS UP TO WHICH THE
ATTACKERS WERE ABLE TO ADVANCE WERE, AN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING CALLED

"THE HALL OF CONGRESS" AND AN APARTMENT HOUSE CALLED "QUARANTE LOGEMENTS",

ABOUT 150-200 METRES FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. FROM THESE TWO
POINTS, THE FORCE ATTACKED THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE WITH VARIOUS FIRE
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ARMS AND PROJECTILES. IT ALSO ATTACKED FROM A THIRD POINT, AN INTER-
SECTION ABOUT 100 METRES NORTH OF THE "QUARANTE LOGEMENTS", A MILITARY

ESTABLISHMENT CALLED "CAMP GUEZO".

138. ON THEIR WAY TO THESE POINTS, THE ATTACKING FORCE SHOT INDIS-
CRIMINATELY, INCLUDING AT CIVILIANS AND NON-MILITARY ESTABLISH-
MENTS. THE BENINESE ARMED FORCES RETURNED FIRE OF THE ATTACKERS
AND WERE EVENTUALLY ABLE TO REPULSE THE ATTACK. AFTER SOME TIME, THE
ATTACKERS RETREATED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE AIRPORT. THE
BENINESE MILITARY FORCE PURSUED THEM BUT WERE NOT ABLE TO PREVENT
THEM FROM LEAVING COTONOU AIRPORT IN THE AIRCRAFT IN WHICH THEY
HAD COME.

139. THE WHOLE EPISODE LASTED ABOUT THREE HOURS. AT LEAST TWO
MEMBERS OF THE ATTACKING FORCE WERE KILLED DURING THE ACTION- ONE
EUROPEAN AND ONE AFRICAN. THE CASUALTIES ON THE BENIN SIDE WERE
SIX DEAD AND 51 WOUNDED. IN THE FIGHTING, A NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS OF
DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES RESIDING IN BENIN WERE ALSO WOUNDED. THE

BENINESE FORCES WERE ABLE TO CAPTURE ONE MEMBER OF THE ATTACKING FORCE, NAMED BA ALPHA OUMAROU WHO IS NOW HELD AS A PRISONER. HE WAS BORN IN SENEGAL, IN 1948, OF HUINEAN PARENTS AND IS OF THE MOSLEM FAITH. HE IS A NATIONAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA BELINGING TO THE PEULH ETHNIC GROUP.

140. IN THE COURSE OF FIGHTING, DURING WHICH THE ATTACKING FORCE USED WEAPONS, SUCH AS MACHINE GUNS, MORTARS AND BAZOOKAS, SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE WAS INFLICTED ON A NUMBER OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUILDINGS, INCLUDING THE PREMISE OF SOME DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN COTONOU, AND EVEN A HOSPITAL.

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INFO ADDIS ABABA 1760
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
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141. ON THE BASIS OF THE TESTIMONY RECEIVED AND EVIDENCE EXAMINED BY IT, THE SPECIAL MISSION IS IN A POSITION TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN WAS THUS SUBJECTED TO AN ARMED ATTACK BY THE ARMED FORCES WHICH ARRIVED AT COTONOU AIRPORT IN THE MORNING OF 16 JANUARY 1977. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE INVADING FORCE WAS THE OVERTHROW OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

OF BENIN.

142. INASMUCH AS THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE OF BENIN WAS VIOLATED BY THIS INVADING FORCE WHICH CAME FROM OUTSIDE THE TERRITORY OF THAT COUNTRY, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE STATE OF BENIN WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION.

143. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT A MAJORITY OF THE ATTACKING FORCE, NOT NATIONALS OF BENIN, WERE PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTION FOR PECUNIARY MOTIVES AND WERE, THEREFORE, MERCENARIES.

144. FROM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE OPERATION WAS CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED, THE SPECIAL MISSION BELIEVES A SIMILAR OPERATION COULD BE CONDUCTED ESLEWHERE AGAINST SMALL DEFENSELESS COUNTRIES FOR SIMILAR PURPOSES.

145. AS MENTIONED EARLIER, THE SPECIAL MISSION HEARD A COMPREHENSIVE TESTIMONY OF A MEMBER OF THE ATTACKING FORCE LEFT BEHIND AND AT PRESENT HELD PRISONER IN BENIN. IT ALSO HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE DOCUMENTATION LEFT BEHIND BY THE ATTACKING FORCE AND MADE AVAILABLE TO IT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BENIN (SEE PARAS, 120-127), ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE PRISONER AND PARTS OF THIS DOCUMENTATION, THE ATTACKERS WHO WERE RECRUITED IN EUROPE AND AFRICA CAME TO MOROCCO FROM PARIS, DAKAR AND ABIDJAN; WERE TRAINED IN A BASE CALLED BENGUERIR NEAR MARRAKESH IN MOROCCO; WERE TRANSPORTED FROM MOROCCO TO GABON ON 15 JANUARY 1977 AND FROM THERE, IN A DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT, STARTED ON THEIR MISSION IN BENIN IN THE NIGHT OF 15-16 JANUARY 1977, ARRIVING IN CONTONOU IN THE MORNING OF THE 16TH. THE SAME SOURCES INDICATE THAT A COLONAL MAURIN WAS IN CHARGE OF THIS MILITARY OPERATION. COLONAL MAURIN, AGAIN ACCORDING TO THESE DOCUMENTS,

WAS HIRED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED, "FRONT DE LIBERATION ET DE REHABILITATION DU DAHOMEY" (F.L.E.R.D.) FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN BENIN AND TO INSTALL IN ITS PLACE A REGIME OF ITS OWN CHOICE. ACCORDING TO THESE DOCUMENTS, GILBERT BOURGUAUD, A FRENCH NATIONAL, BORN IN CAEN, FRANCE, ON 30 JANUARY 1929, HAS BEEN EMPLOYED AS AN ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GABON SINCE 3 AUGUST 1976. THE PRISONER IDENTIFIED THE PHOTOGRAPH OF GILBERT BOURGUAUD AS THAT OF COLONEL MAURIN. HOWEVER, THE SPECIAL MISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WISHES TO CLARIFY THAT THE TERMS OF ITS MANDATE, AS WELL AS
THE TIME AVAILABLE AT ITS DISPOSAL FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, DID NOT
PERMIT IT TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER AND VERIFY THE TESTIMONY OF THE
PRISONER PERTAINING TO THESE MATTERS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE
SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE CONTAINED IN THE DOCUMENTATION.
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